

**CHARTER
OF THE
BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM INFORMATICS
WORKING GROUP OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS (SES)
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND
SUSTAINABILITY (CENRS)
NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL**

A. Official Designation

The Working Group on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Informatics (BioEco) is hereby reestablished by action of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability (CENRS).

B. Purpose

The CENRS Subcommittee on Ecological Systems (SES) continues the Working Group on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Informatics as a forum to improve coordination of Federal biodiversity and ecosystem informatics activities and products, and link Federal efforts with those of the non-Federal and International sectors.

"Biodiversity and ecosystem informatics" is defined as including the information content, as well as the systems, standards, information services, and technologies needed to develop, access, deliver, integrate and apply the range of biological and ecological information. It also includes a human dimension and social science component that relates to human understanding and application of information for biodiversity, environmental, and social sustainability.

A number of Federal agency programs and activities increase access to and enhance interoperability of biodiversity and ecosystem information systems, standards, and services. Similar efforts are also underway among state, local and non-government organizations. The non-Federal sectors (state and local government, tribal organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the international community) also play a significant role as information providers and users. The CENRS SES provides an ideal venue for communication, coordination, and leveraging of Federal activities in this area through its Biodiversity and Ecosystem Informatics Working Group.

BioEco improves coordination of Federal biodiversity and ecosystem informatics activities by defining common goals and objectives, identifying common interests and priorities, and promoting the sharing of agency resources. Current examples of the advantages of such Federal interagency cooperation include the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS), the standardized database of scientific nomenclature, taxonomy and common names for all groups of organisms with an emphasis on the species of North America, and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) Viewer and database, which serve as a focal point for integration, delivery and visualization of NFHAP data from multiple state and Federal agencies, and counterparts in the private sector.

C. Functions

The Functions of the BioEco Working Group are to:

1. Increase communication, coordination, and leveraging of Federal activities in biodiversity and ecosystem informatics, working with other key entities.
2. Promote cost savings and efficiencies and prevent duplication of effort for biodiversity and ecosystem informatics activities across member agencies.
3. Coordinate interagency activities to encourage adoption of core principles of data access, availability, and interoperability and adhere to Open Government requirements for data.
4. Support science and technology for sustainability to promote sustainable products, processes, and systems, with a focus on biodiversity and ecosystems.
5. Initiate and support partnerships with the non-Federal sector, and provide a forum for non-Federal agencies and organizations to coordinate with Federal agencies.
6. Liaise with the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) on Federal agency programs and activities in biodiversity and ecosystem informatics.
7. Coordinate U.S. biodiversity and ecosystem informatics activities with international efforts and organizations in this area.
8. Advise the SES and make recommendations on initiatives and issues relating to biodiversity and ecosystem informatics.
9. Coordinate with NSTC Interagency Public Access Committee established in America Competes Act of 2010 (Section 103), and assist with implementation of other aspects of the Act as directed by SES and CENRS.

Activities to be carried out by the BioEco Working Group are detailed in yearly work plans available on the BioEco website, www.bioeco.gov.

D. Membership

Representatives from the following agencies with biodiversity and ecosystems informatics responsibilities make up the membership of BioEco:

Council on Environmental Quality

Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Library
Forest Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Department of Defense

Department of Energy

Department of Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
Fish and Wildlife Service
National Park Service

Department of State

Department of Transportation

Environmental Protection Agency

Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control
National Institutes of Health
National Library of Medicine/National Center for Biotechnology Information

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

National Archives and Records Administration

National Science Foundation

Smithsonian Institution

U.S. Agency for International Development

All organizations are encouraged to name a principal member and an alternate. Meetings are open to Federal employees with responsibilities in biodiversity and ecosystems informatics. On occasion, meetings may be limited to principal members or their designees due to the specific nature of the material under discussion or due to time constraints.

E. BioEco Operations

1. There will be two co-chairs, each from a different agency, and an Executive Secretary. An OSTP liaison for the group will be identified and OMB representation is invited.
2. BioEco may establish subgroups to work on particular tasks, including meetings, reports, deliverables, and proposals as well as outcomes from meetings and workshops.

3. The BioEco Working Group will convene a minimum of four meetings each fiscal year, hosted by member agencies. Additional meetings by teleconference may be held to discuss timely opportunities and carry out BioEco tasks. BioEco will share and discuss perspectives of all participating agencies and ensure coordination among the parties.
4. Agendas and records of actions of BioEco meetings are prepared by the Executive Secretary. Complete records of all activities are maintained by the Executive Secretary.

F. Private Sector Interface

BioEco may work with the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) to secure appropriate private sector advice, and will recommend to the SES and/or the Director of OSTP the nature of additional private sector advice needed to accomplish its mission. BioEco may also interact with and receive ad hoc advice from various private-sector groups as consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). BioEco will regularly receive information briefings from non-Federal sources, but these shall be for information only in accordance with FACA.

G. Termination Date

The BioEco Informatics Working Group will terminate on September 30, 2013, unless renewed by the CENRS Subcommittee on Ecological Systems.

H. Determination

We hereby determine that the BioEco Informatics Working Group is in the public interest in connection with the performance of the duties imposed on the Executive Branch by law, and that such duties can best be performed through the advice and counsel of such a group.

Approved:

Jimmy Reaves, USDA Forest Service
Co-Chair, NSTC/CENR Subcommittee on Ecological Systems

Date

Anne Kinsinger, U.S. Geological Survey
Co-Chair, NSTC/CENRS Subcommittee on Ecological Systems

Date